



Manual for rural entrepreneurs

Welcome

A choppy man in an expensive suit with a gold ring sitting in a fancy skyscraper giving people the orders and sipping double espresso – is that an entrepreneur? We don't think so!

Imagine yourself being an entrepreneur, it is not impossible. All the cool things you think about doing, but never do, what if you actually started doing them? And what if you looked outside the borders of urban areas. There are hidden treasures there that can and will work with you. This Guidebook is a product of an international group which tried to answer these questions, and actually did it! We realised that a lot of people don't know the possibilities of rural areas as a great potential place for personal development and work. Erasmus+ made this possible by funding the Entrerural chainproject, which aims to foster entrepreneurial mindsets through raising the awareness of rural/natural areas as a potential field for career development.

Four organisations, four countries: Estonia, Armenia, Georgia and Denmark. A mixed group of youngsters concerning gender, language, culture and background were gathered in different rural areas. We were there to analyse and see the potential, understand the obstacles, experience local examples of entrepreneurship in rural places and actually apply the outcomes and implement it instantly. If you read this guidebook you will get the knowledge and sense of what the group achieved, and how You, yourself, can see the potential and hopefully it will inspire you to think big and act.

Through the different chapters you will get insides on our story and progress. In addition to that you will get a more theoretical part of analysing your entrerural ideas.

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Definition of Entrerural (Entrepreneurship in rural areas)

Entrerural is a new idea offering an innovative product, process or service. The main difference between common known business and entrerural is that, it is more oriented towards the community's development and needs rather than the income. As well it tries to find the balance between the environmental sustainability of your business, potential of the local community and income generating activities.



Good examples of entrerural businesses

Talin Dolls

The Talin Dolls project generates income to the local community of Talin through the sale of exquisitely hand-crocheted dolls wearing the costumes of traditional Armenian regions (Moush, Zeytoun, Sebastia and others). The business gives a portion of their profits to benefit disabled children in the Talin region. Practically the money goes to the creation and sustaining of a resource center for disabled children. This center works to identify disabled children, their needs, provide information for parents, training of medical staff, physiotherapy and to create a new community for families of children with special needs. Talin Dolls also provide employment for the community and space for personal development for local women. Unemployment is a crucial problem in rural areas of Armenia, and that is amongst other things what makes this business a holistic success. The dolls are being sold in big cities of Armenia and also abroad. There are several similar projects running in other small towns and villages of Armenia.



For more information about this project you can watch the video : <https://vimeo.com/48584007>
Or check the web page : <http://www.talindolls.com/>



Saaremaa Sepad

Saaremaa Sepad was founded in 1997 as a family business. The company is located in Saikla village in Estonia. Saaremaa is specialised in making and selling wrought products. Clients are construction stores and household product sellers both in Estonia and abroad. The business is exporting goods to Finland, Sweden and Germany. The Blacksmiths of Saaremaa is focused on making construction and decorating products. There are over 300 different items in the products list. Saaremaa is as well working with special orders on a project basis. Invested in smithy that is open in Kuressaare castle courtyard, where everyone can try making something.

Interview from Aripaev 17. detsember 2004:

«Most of my work is done by hand and head at the same time» says Andres Ella. In addition to the driver's work he holds a hammer in his hand. He also takes part in product development. Almost all of the products are designed as a sophisticated stuff, such as forging fittings.

The reason why the business is successful is that everything is handmade, and because nobody offers anything similar to this. They keep the old traditions running, by doing it in the way, it was done hundreds years ago.



Zebo Guest House



Zebo is an eco-friendly guesthouse in Gobroneti - small village in the rural Georgia. The visitors of Zebo can experience the whole beauty of Georgian nature and culture. The place offers possibilities to explore the local traditions; to learn how to make wine, chacha, cheese and other homemade products; how to be a good tamada (master of the ceremony during traditional dinner). They also offer walking tours around Gobroneti, visiting local natural and cultural monuments, tasting traditional Georgian cuisine, agro-tours - getting acquainted with typical Ajarian village life and traditional farming practices: visit to the local smothery, taking care of hives and beekeeping, production of dairy, agriculture - growing tobacco, cattle breeding, product storage, and many others.



For more information you can check the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/guesthousezebo>

Favsbjerg nature hostel



On the Danish youth exchange we visited Favsbjerg Nature Hostel. The place consists of two big shelters situated in a beautiful nature area with a forest and a lake.

Bigger and smaller groups of primary school kids can go on trips and camp in the nature. Before the place was just a field without the trees and the lake, but the owners Leo and Gisela Luff decided to create two shelters so people could visit the place and feel like being part of the nature. The owners therefore had to spend a lot of time getting the water for the lake and the trees for the forest surrounding the shelters. Furthermore Leo together with his sons build the shelters themselves. To build the place has therefore been a huge work. At the area it is possible to cook since one of the shelters is a kitchen shelter and the other one is for staying and sleeping in.

The reason why Favsbjerg Nature Hostel is successful is that it provides a natural experience with good facilities for a cheap price.

For more information you can check the website: <http://favsbjergnaturhostel.dk/>

*What venues we have
used for our development
of the concept, activities and outcomes*



Hellevad Watermill, Rødekro Denmark

On our first youth exchange the venue was this special place called Hellevad Vandmølle (Hellevad Watermill), which is an ecological farm with agriculture surrounded by nature. The place's past as a watermill is visible when you look at the millstream that runs right next to the house and the old mill building that now works as a seminar room, where our activities were held.

Two idealistic and inspiring people run Hellevad Watermill; the married couple Bjarne and Elsebeth. They run the place together with several young employees from different parts of the world, usually volunteers from the WWOOF association. When we were there, Kuba from Poland and Nick from the United States were cooking for us the whole week. The whole place has a very homey and welcoming feeling – it doesn't matter where you are from. Bjarne and Elsebeth are keen in meeting new people and inviting them into their home to show how the daily life on the farm looks like.



Being idealistic, Bjarne and Elsebeth don't go on compromise with anything and that is visible while you spend time on the farm, seeing their own special wastewater treatment system and a lot of the food you eat is produced on the farm, for example wheat for the bread. Bjarne and Elsebeth is a truly inspiring couple, and we wish them to continue making the world a better place – one WWOOF'er and one ecological grain at a time.

Why it's an successful entrepreneurial example: Hellevad watermill has an eco-friendly approach, it offers an actual experience on how to sustain on a farm.



<http://www.vandmoellen.dk/>



Udabno

The “Oasis” on the Udabno desert

Udabno is a small village with migrant people from the mountain region of Svaneti. The story of this small desert starts from the local people. By the history they used to live in the far away with a completely different nature, altitude, culture and situation. But one day in the end of 20th century there was a catastrophe by powerful nature.



People have lost everything. Soviet government decided to move this people to another place and make it convenient. Udabno was a real desert. There was no trees, or water - nothing for living conditions. It was hard to get used to and live a completely different area for these people. There was no hard winter or the rivers and forest, which was in the part of the Svaneti region. So in order to adapt people started to change their mind-set and the way of life.

One day a couple from Poland was exploring this region. They were impressed by the area and got very inspired. In the beginning it seemed impossible to make the dream come true but willing was so strong that they slowly started implementing it. Confidence, hard work and the running after the dream made it happened.

And one day "Oasis" opened its doors - hostel with an amazing restaurant, which became the real oasis in the desert area.

Firstly it was the small lonely home. Ksawery (the founder of "Oasis") had a challenge to adapt to the local community and most importantly gain the trust from the villagers. After some time he realized that it was the only closest stop point on the way to the UNESCO world heritage site, the monastery of David Gareja, so he built a restaurant where people can try the regional food and stay for the rest. The dream was getting more and more realistic when some travellers and volunteers from different countries helped a lot with developing Oasis not asking any money for that. You can still feel the different world inside the hostel, filled with various stories, and outside in the village, but the sun shines equally for both of them.

The homepage: <http://www.oasisclubudabno.com/>



Lastiver Anapat

In Armenia, among beautiful mountains there is a tilted area called Lastiver Anapat. It's perfect for outdoor activities: spending holidays, relaxing, hiking, fishing, climbing and exploring the mysterious story of this place. The visitors can rent nice wooden houses built on the trees for affordable prices. There is also camping area for free and you can rent the tent. It's also possible to ask the owners to cook delicious regional food and get drinks in a nicely made wooden bar.

Mr. Vahagan is the founder of this place. Before he decided to establish this place, he was in the army, where he learned the skills like: building houses, cooking, using technical tools, which later helped him to build wooden houses, bar, bridges, kitchen and resting areas. As Mr. Vahagan says many centuries ago in this area the monks lived in caves praying to the sun. In present days the monks are gone, but you can discover the caves, which are telling you the mysterious stories through the ancient monuments and drawings. Mr. Vahagan is the man who kept those ancient religious traditions and in winter he is living in those caves to take care of the place.



We were lucky to experience the hospitality of Mr. Vahagan. He is very open minded, positive and always happy to meet and host travellers from all over the world. This story is great example of how the entrepreneurial mind works in real life and in this case we can highlight the success defining factors like location, motivated and hard working entrepreneur and mysterious history of the place.

Paekalda Holiday Houses

Paekalda Holiday houses are situated next to the lake Rummu, 20 meters from the shore. The lake is known for its crystal-clear water (that has given the lake nickname Lightblue Lagoon) and its unique history. Rummu was used as a mining site for Vasalemma marble (a kind of limestone) for a very long time. Most of the workforce came from among the detainees of Murru prison. When the prison was closed, pumps that kept the quarry and the prison dry were shut down. According to a legend, water rose so quickly that it covered a large mining excavator and other equipment that could have been taken to a higher ground well in time.



The whole area is owned by the government except a small place, where Ignas has started a small business. He knew that a lot of divers enjoy exploring the lake because of the drowned prison building. Ignas realized that the divers didn't have any places to stay or sleep. So he bought the small area from the government and started to build small wooden houses. Now he has a big Lake-house, two Hunter Houses and three Fishermen Houses, which are used by the divers but also as holiday venue.

Ignas and his family is running and constantly adding new stuff. He is passionate about what he does and takes good care about the surroundings.



Why successful entrepreneurial example:
Ignas noticed the need of accommodation, the service quality is really good - they are very friendly. The venue is in a good location. They pay a lot of attention to their visitors.



The homepage: <http://www.paekalda.ee/>

Have a look at the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHXaKH1zo6Q>



*Possibilities of doing business
in rural areas compared
to urban areas*





Starting a business or creating initiatives in the rural areas is quite different than in the urban ones. There are a lot of possibilities in the rural areas that you can't find in the cities. Especially the beauty of the nature that makes these areas perfect for doing an enterprise and creating sustainable initiatives. In the age of urbanisation a great desire to experience the calmness and stress-free energy of rural areas is arising in many people. They come to the rural places to rest and enjoy, to do activities like hiking, fishing, diving, climbing and so on. Another desire is to see, hear and enjoy the unique local habits, cultural heritage, the special elements like food and handicraft that reflects the local culture.

Advantages for making EntreRural initiatives and businesses

The following section will help you to clearly see the advantages that the enterprise have in the rural areas, from the perspective of an initiative/business.

Advantages for the initiative/business in the rural areas:

- Natural resources and beautiful nature which attract tourists and visitors and that is the main base to sustain your business;
- Local traditions and cultural heritage that is unique for this particular place;
- The sense of community in the rural areas is special and can be a positive element of your business;
- Cheaper to rent/buy land or houses in rural areas and also more space to utilize
- No or less competition than in the urban areas;
- Funds from for example EU, national governments, local municipalities and many others;
- Help from voluntary workers like woofers.com (possibility to get volunteers willing to gain knowledge and experience by working in the rural area);
- Profit (In case of running a right business in a right place);

Advantages for the local community:

- Villages' access to the additional goods and services;
- Economical growth;
- Reducing immigration to the cities;
- Promoting the level of social security and welfare in villages;
- More equal development in the rural areas and the urban areas;
- Creating job places;
- Usually businesses are more environmentally sustainable and more eco-friendly than in the urban areas;
- Raising awareness about the possibilities that the rural areas have the importance of taking care of the nature;

When you, after seeing these advantages, choose to make an initiative in a local rural area it is important to do your research and preparation phase well. The next chapter will take you through that.

*To see the potential
and specifics of the context*



Every context in every country is unique, has unique opportunities and potential. Every place has its own spirit, its magic and its rules. This chapter will take you through this.

When you have found one certain or more contexts that you find interesting, it is important to get a full overview of what this context offers you, what obstacles you can possibly meet there, and what people you will be working with. Here we have made 4 steps of how to get this overview. Afterwards we will offer you a few advices on how to do this, and how to approach the local community in a progressive way.



Stakeholder analysis:

A stakeholder is anybody who might have much or just a slight interest in your idea.

You should investigate:

- Who is here with interest in my idea?
- Who of those will be for my idea, and who can possibly be against?
- What potential competencies and opportunities can this group of people contribute to my idea?

Stakeholder	Pro or con	Why/what interest	Importance 1-10
Local teachers	Pro	Learning activities for kids, that is not taking their job	9
Local city leader	Both	There might be obstacles on us interfering, but if we build good relations it would be beneficial	8
Local kids	Pro	They don't always have that much to do, and they are the main target group	10

Context/culture analysis:

- What is possible and not within this social context? (Laws, rules, social discourses, conservatism in certain topics, etc.)
- What potential obstacles can I meet here?
- What practical pros and cons are here? (Geography, venues, power, funding, etc.)

Need assessment:

This analysis is about finding out what is needed in the community or context that you are investigating. If you apply these needs in your idea, it will generate extra engagement, ownership and support in the local society.

The questions to be asked are simple:

- What needs are in this context?
- What is there lack of in the community? (use different perspectives)
- Can any of these needs be applied by my idea?

Analysis of “fit-ability”:

With the knowledge you now have about the context you should try to answer the following questions:

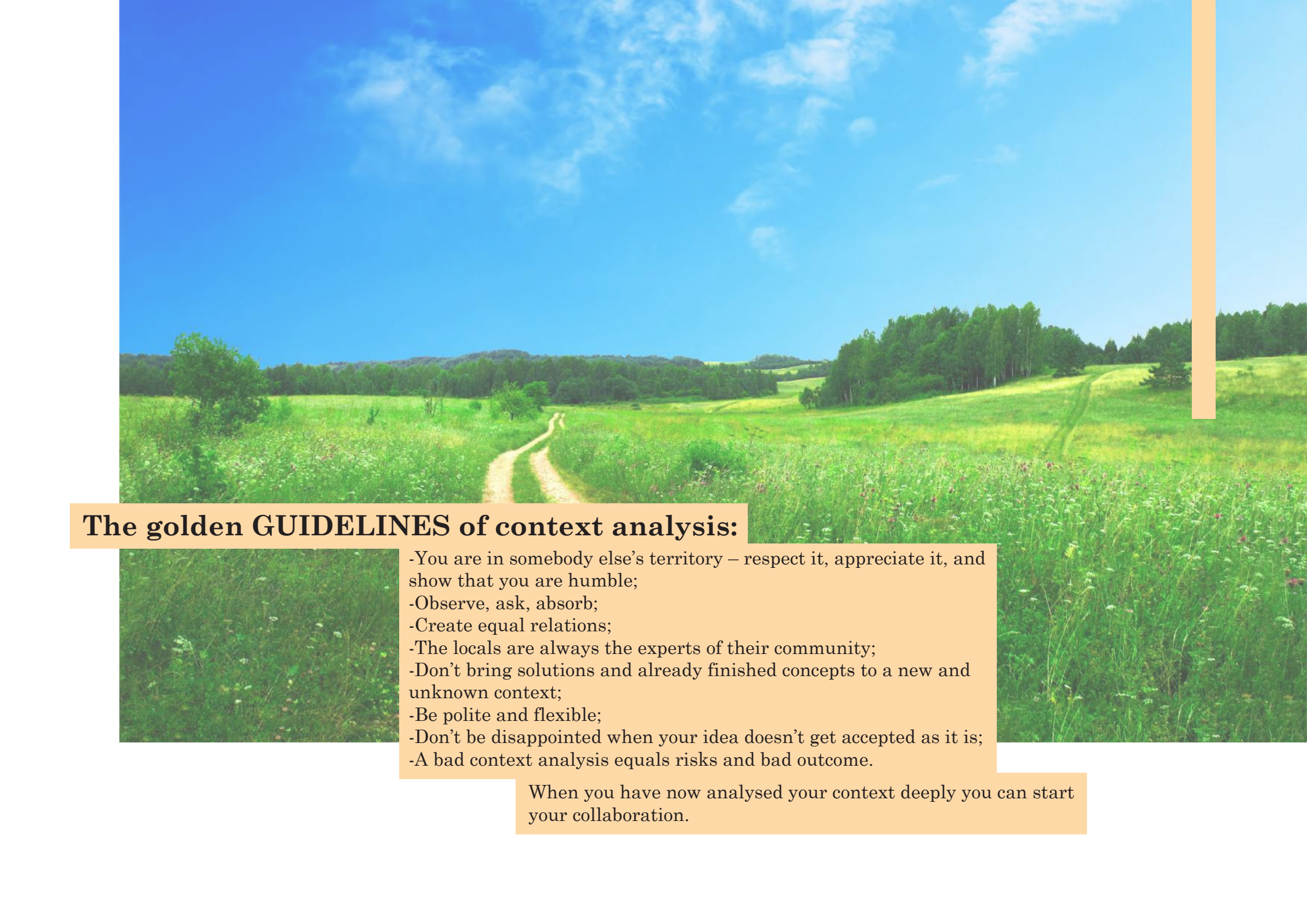
- How does my idea fit with this specific context?
- What elements in this context can enrich my idea?

Analysis of the potential:

In this step you take your idea up to reconsideration, you hold it up against your new knowledge of the context. You consider:

- What is possible in this area?
- How you can fit it to the local conditions?
- How you can use the local potentials to make your idea even better?
- How can my idea possibly be connected with elements of the local context?

When you are approaching a local community and context you are moving into somebody else's home field. Therefore we offer some guidelines and advices about this process.



The golden GUIDELINES of context analysis:

- You are in somebody else's territory – respect it, appreciate it, and show that you are humble;
- Observe, ask, absorb;
- Create equal relations;
- The locals are always the experts of their community;
- Don't bring solutions and already finished concepts to a new and unknown context;
- Be polite and flexible;
- Don't be disappointed when your idea doesn't get accepted as it is;
- A bad context analysis equals risks and bad outcome.

When you have now analysed your context deeply you can start your collaboration.

Collaboration with local communities

When you are done with your analysis of the new context you can start your collaboration. We will now give few tips and tricks on how to make a good and progressive collaboration.

Work in the conditions – don't try to change them.

In a local community there might be a specific way of doing things, traditions, discourses, hierarchies etc. Don't try to break these for your own benefit, find your way through them, respect them, work with them, find the potential benefits within them.

Find your key contact

A key contact is a person or a group that is supportive towards your idea, and can help you in getting it accepted in the community.

Example: In Udabno the EntreRural coordinator got in contact with the local music teacher and head of a girls choir. This lady was also a strong civil society agent, with power to set things in motion, and people were listening to her. We used this contact to build a good relation with the local community through her approval of our idea.

Build equal partnership

The equality of the partnership you build is crucial. Make sure to build an open, honest and equal relationship where you hold a space for constructive critics and new ideas from the local community. Don't consider yourself the boss.

Make the local community a part of your idea – not just a venue

If you want to make the most out of the combination of your idea and the local potential make the local ownership of your idea as big as possible.

Example: In Udabno Rural Fest we both brought workshops from outside to Udabno, and at the same time local bands were playing, locals were selling food and etc. This made the ownership much bigger, and made it into Udabno's fest, and not ours.

Give in – it comes back doubled

If you manage to make an equal, honest and both side beneficial partnership in a rural community you will explore a unique and amazing kind of hospitality. This means that if you offer the local community opportunities and bring in added value, it will come back in your favour more than doubled. So buy in, it will come back more than you can imagine.

*Now you are ready, just do it.
Here we have provided a few do's and keywords for you.*

Do's

- Chose rural area
- Observe successful and unsuccessful examples of Entrerural
- Respect the culture and traditions of local community
- Communicate with locals (involve and help them)
- Collect stories (locals, your experience)
- Fill your learning baggage
- Afterwards open your baggage to others (share your experience with your community)
- Be open for adventures (take risks and be challenged, don't be afraid of unexpected situations, because everything happened to you becomes a nice story)
- Do what you like, but also like what you do
- Try something new (food, drinks, activities, games and etc.)
- Save memories (Photos, videos, sounds, diary)
- Act!
- Don't wait somebody will start first
- Have a key-person (contact person with locals)
- Make the people around feel free, open minded and safe

Keywords

- Entrerural : entrepreneurship in the rural areas
- Rural areas : the countryside outskirts and undeveloped territories (usually outside the city)
- Local community: group of people sharing a particular rural area, values and culture
- Business sustainability : long-term productive (future oriented, balance between business and environment)
- Personal development: obtaining new skills, and empowering yourself trough analyzing and observing
- Potential: getting new perspective of a particular rural area

This guide is a result of the project “EntreRural”, which was financed by European Commission’s Erasmus+ programme and was the chain of three Youth Exchanges and one training course implemented in Denmark, Georgia, Armenian and Estonia during the period of October 2014 and August 2015. The project was jointly implemented by the 4 partner organizations:



Dansk ICYE

International Cultural Youth Exchange

www.icye.dk/



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